AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 5, 14, and 24 as follows, without prejudice or disclaimer to continued examination on the merits:

1.   (Currently Amended):   A method of managing distributed statistical data retrieval in a network device, comprising:

a.   gathering statistical data on at least one card within the network device periodically;

b.   sending a predetermined number of packets from the card to a central process, wherein each packet includes at least a portion of the statistical data, and wherein the predetermined number of packets is determined via a negotiation between the card and the central process upon a registration of the card with the central process;

c.   sending an acknowledge request to the central process in conjunction with sending the last packet in the predetermined number; and

d.   controlling the number of packets sent from the card to the central process, including:

sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to the card indicating a time that the card can resume sending packets to the central process, said time being based on an estimate of a time interval needed by the central process to process a sufficient number of the received packets to reduce the number of packets awaiting processing below a predetermined threshold,

repeating steps b, c and d when the acknowledge packet is received at the card and the time indicated has elapsed.

2.   (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein sending an acknowledge request to the central process in conjunction with sending the last packet in the predetermined number, comprises:

sending the acknowledge request embedded within the last packet in the predetermined number.

3.   (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein sending an acknowledge request to the central process in conjunction with sending the last packet in the predetermined number, comprises:

sending the acknowledge request in an acknowledge request packet separate from the last packet in the predetermined number.

4.   (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to the card, comprises:

detecting an acknowledge request at the central process in a packet received from the card, and

sending the acknowledge packet to the card from the central process.

5.   (Currently Amended): A method of managing distributed statistical data retrieval in a network device, comprising:

a.   gathering statistical data on at least one card within the network device periodically;

b.   sending a predetermined number of packets from the card to a central process, wherein each packet includes at least a portion of the statistical data, and wherein the predetermined number of packets is determined via a negotiation between the card and the central process upon a registration of the card with the central process;

c.   sending an acknowledge request to the central process in conjunction with sending the last packet in the predetermined number; and

d.   controlling the number of packets sent from the card to the central process, including:

sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to the card; and

repeating steps b, c and d when the acknowledge packet is received at the card,

wherein sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to the card, comprises:

detecting an acknowledge request at the central process in a packet received from the card;

determining a number of packets to be processed by the central process;

comparing the number of packets to be processed to a predetermined threshold periodically; and

sending the acknowledge packet to the card from the central process when the number of packets to be processed is less than the predetermined threshold.

6.   (Previously Presented):   The method of claim 1, wherein sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to the card further comprises:

detecting an acknowledge request at the central process-in a packet received from the card;

determining a number of packets to be processed by the central process;

comparing the number of packets to be processed to a predetermined threshold; and

estimating when the number of packets to be processed will be below the predetermined threshold.

7.   (Original):   The method of claim 6, wherein if the number of packets to be processed is below the predetermined threshold, then the indicated time is immediately.

8.   (Original):   The method of claim 1, wherein gathering statistical data on at least one card within the network device periodically, comprises:

gathering a current statistical data sample on the card periodically at a first period.

9.   (Original): The method of claim 8, wherein gathering statistical data on at least one card within the network device periodically further comprises:

adding the current statistical data sample to a data summary each time the current statistical data sample is gathered.

10.   (Original): The method of claim 9, wherein sending packets from the card to a central process comprises:

sending packets containing at least a portion of the current statistical data sample from the card to the central process periodically at a first period; and

sending packets containing at least a portion of the data summary from the card to the central process periodically at a second period.

11.   (Original): The method of claim 10, wherein, in normal operation, the second period is longer than the first period.

12.   (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the card is a first card and the statistical data is first statistical data and wherein the method further comprises:

e.   gathering second statistical data on a second card within the network device periodically;

f.   sending the predetermined number of packets from the second card to the central process, wherein each packet includes at least a portion of the second statistical data;

g.   sending an acknowledge request to the central process in conjunction with sending the last packet in the predetermined number; and

h.   controlling the number of packets sent from the second card to the central process, including:

sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to the second card; and

repeating steps f, g and h when the acknowledge packet is received at the second card.

13. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the statistical data is first statistical data and wherein the method further comprises:

   e. gathering second statistical data on the card periodically;

   f. sending the predetermined number of packets from the card to the central process, wherein each packet includes at least a portion of the second statistical data;

   g. sending an acknowledge request to the central process in conjunction with sending the last packet in the predetermined number; and

   h. controlling the number of packets including a portion of the second statistical data sent from the card to the central process, including:

   sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to the card; and

   repeating steps f, g and h when the acknowledge packet is received at the card.

14. (Currently Amended): A method of managing distributed statistical data retrieval in a network device, comprising:

   a. gathering statistical data on a plurality of cards within the network device periodically;

   b. sending a predetermined number of packets from each card to the central process, wherein each packet includes at least a portion of the statistical data, and wherein the predetermined number of packets is determined via a negotiation between the card and the central process upon a registration of the card with the central process; and

   c. sending an acknowledge request from each card to the central process in conjunction with sending the last packet in the predetermined number; and

   d. controlling the number of packets sent from the cards to the central process, including:

   sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to each card indicating a time at which the card can resume sending packets to the central process, said time being based on an estimate of time a interval needed by the central process to process a

sufficient number of the received packets to reduce the number of packets awaiting processing below a predetermined threshold; and

repeating steps b, c and d when the acknowledge packet is received at each card and the time indicated has elapsed.

15.   (Original): The method of claim 14, wherein sending an acknowledge request from each card to the central process in conjunction with sending the lack packet in the predetermined number, comprises:

sending the acknowledge request from each card embedded within the last packet in the predetermined number.

16.   (Original): The method of claim 14, wherein sending an acknowledge request from each card to the central process in conjunction with sending the last packet in the predetermined number, comprises:

sending the acknowledge request from each card in an acknowledge request packet separate from the last packet in the predetermined number.

17.   (Original): The method of claim 14, wherein sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to each card, comprises:

detecting an acknowledge request at the central process in a packet received from one of the cards; and

sending the acknowledge packet to that card from the central process.

18.   (Original): The method of claim 14, wherein sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to each card, comprises:

detecting an acknowledge request at the central process in a packet received from one of the cards;

determining a number of packets to be processed by the central process;

comparing the number of packets to be processed to a predetermined threshold periodically; and

sending the acknowledge packet to that card from the central process when the number of packets to be processed is less than the predetermined threshold.

19.   (Previously Presented): The method of claim 14, wherein sending an acknowledge packet from the central process to each card, comprises:

detecting an acknowledge request at the central process in a packet received from one of the cards;

determining a number of packets to be processed by the central process;

comparing the number of packets to be processed to a predetermined threshold;

estimating when the number of packets to be processed will be below the predetermined threshold; and

sending the acknowledge packet from the central process to the card indicating a time that that card may resume sending packets to the central process.

20.   (Original): The method of claim 14, wherein gathering statistical data on a plurality of cards within the network device periodically, comprises:

gathering a current statistical data sample on each card periodically at a first period.

21.   (Original): The method of claim 20, wherein gathering statistical data on a plurality of cards within the network device periodically further comprises:

adding the current statistical data sample to a data summary on each card each time the current statistical data sample is gathered.

22.   (Original): The method of claim 21, wherein sending a predetermined number of packets from each card to the central process comprises:

sending packets containing at least a portion of the current statistical data sample from each card to the central process periodically at a first period; and

sending packets containing at least a portion of the data summary from each card to the central process periodically at a second period.

23.   (Original): The method of claim 22, wherein, in normal operation, the second period is longer than the first period.

24.   (Currently Amended):   A method of managing distributed statistical data retrieval in a network device, comprising:

gathering a plurality of different types of statistical data on at least one card within the network device periodically; and

sending groups of packets from the card to a central process at staggered times, wherein each group of packets includes one of different types of statistical data wherein the staggered times are determined by a plurality of polling timers, each corresponding to one of said statistical data types, and wherein a size of each of the groups of packets is determined via a negotiation between the card and the central process upon a registration of the card with the central process.

25.   (Original): The method of claim 24, wherein gathering a plurality of different types of statistical data on at least one card, comprises:

gathering each of the different types of statistical data at a different time.

26.   (Canceled)